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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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INSIDE

Puerto Rico unions protest mass layoffs by colonial gov't
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Workers boosted by immigrant rights actions

BY RÓGER CALERO

In the wake of the massive immigrant rights mobilizations that took place in hundreds of cities on May 1, the U.S. Senate is preparing to resume debate on immigration "reform" legislation, with no agreement in sight. This debate takes place as discussions on this question continue to buzz in factories, fields, and other workplaces across the country. Many immigrants and other workers have felt boosted by the recent marches and other mass actions demanding legal status for undocumented workers.

"The march helped us see our strength," Anselmo Mota, who works at the Stampede Meat slaughterhouse in the Chicago area, said in an interview. Mota felt that "this puts pressure on the politicians so that they have to take us into account."

At the Stampede plant, workers reported that so many of them attended the 400,000-strong May Day march in Chicago that the company had to shut down many production lines. While management refused to give workers permission to attend the march, it felt compelled to post a notice saying that no one would be fired for missing work. There was overwhelming support for the march in the plant, including from some Polish-born and African-American workers who did not march, workers reported.

At the plant, where an organizing drive is under way to bring in the United Food and Commercial Workers, bosses organized meetings after May 1 where they told employees that unions have a history of not supporting immigrants. This sparked discussion among workers, who noted that the company had not given them permission while unions had been a prominent part of the Chicago march.

A worker who asked that his name not be used for fear of company reprisals reported that 300 co-workers had signed a petition requesting the day off to attend the march. "They don't like it when we do things together," he said. "They don't want us to organize."

Press reports indicate that relatively few workers—and fewer than during the previous immigrant rights demonstrations on April 10—were fired for attending the May Day actions. "We didn't want our workers to have to decide between allegiance to the corporation or this immigrant cause," Dov Charney, owner of American Apparel Inc. in Los Angeles, told the *Wall Street Journal*, explaining why the company, like many others in the city's garment district, de-

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Sudan: U.S. gov't presses for military intervention



Jose Cendon/AFP/Getty Images

Rwandan troops, part of the African Union military operation in Sudan, board a U.S. Air Force plane, July 17, 2005, in Kigali, Rwanda, headed to Darfur region.

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

The U.S. government is seeking to use a "peace" agreement between the government of Sudan and opposition forces in the Darfur region to open the road for an imperialist-led military force in that area. The May 5 accord calls for the disarming of pro-government militias and the integration of the opposition Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) forces into the national army.

On May 9 U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice went to the United Nations to call for speeding up the deployment of UN "peacekeeping" troops to Darfur, a large region in the west of Sudan.

U.S. deputy secretary of state Robert Zoellick was Washington's point man in brokering the deal. The Sudanese government had rejected any UN "peacekeeping" force in Darfur until

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Cuba, Venezuela offer medical, literacy, and other aid for Bolivia

BY PAUL PEDERSON

On May 8 in Copacabana, a rural town in western Bolivia, a new medical center was inaugurated where working people will now receive free eye care, including operations to eliminate blindness by cataracts. It was the fourth of six new ophthalmologic centers being set up in that area with help from Cuba, which has provided volunteer doctors and technical equipment.

Cuba's medical assistance is part of an April 29 agreement by the Cuban and Venezuelan governments to offer Bolivia aid and favorable terms of trade. The pact, signed in Havana by presidents Evo Morales of Bolivia, Fidel Castro of Cuba, and Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, is an expansion of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of our Americas (ALBA), a trade agreement signed a year ago between Venezuela and Cuba.

Under the new agreement, Cuba pledged to send more volunteer doctors and teachers to Bolivia. This includes a commitment to back a campaign to teach 720,000 Bolivians to read and write in two years, using methods previously used with success in Venezuela. Havana has already delivered 30,000 TV sets plus workbooks and videotapes for the Bolivian teachers. The literacy program will be in Spanish, Aymara, Quechua, and Guaraní.

Cuba already has some 700 volunteer doctors serving in the farthest reaches of the South American country, where it is also helping to equip 20 rural Bolivian hospitals. In addition, 5,000 Bolivian youth will be provided with scholarships to study medicine for free in Cuba.

The Bolivian Medical Association has objected to the presence of Cuban doctors, but to many working people they are heroes.

"Thank God the Cuban doctors arrived," said Gladys Melani, 75, the Associated Press reported. "They operated on me, and thanks to them I can see, I can keep working."

For its part, the Venezuelan government is helping set up 109 rural radio stations in Bolivia. It has also agreed to set up a $100 million fund for development programs and another $30 million fund for other social projects in that country.

AP reported that Cuba and Venezuela have also agreed to buy all of Bolivia's soybeans, "recently left without a market after Colombia signed a free trade pact with the United States."

Meanwhile, the heads of state of Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, and Venezuela met May 4 to discuss the decision made three days earlier by the administration of Bolivian president Evo Morales to exert greater state control over that country's natural gas fields.

The move has the biggest impact in Brazil, which imports more than half

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Sago miners' relatives denounce bosses' responsibility in disaster

BY SAM MANUEL

BUCKHANNON, West Virginia—During a three-day public hearing into the deaths of 12 miners killed January 2 at the Sago Mine in West Virginia, family members expressed outrage at safety conditions in the mine and the slow response by company and Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) officials in mounting a rescue effort.

Relatives were also angry that four months after the deaths in the mine, investigations by the mine owners and state and federal mine safety officials were "inconclusive" as to the cause of the explosion, which trapped the miners in a highly toxic atmosphere for some 40 hours. MSHA officials said their investigation would continue at

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'Militant' sales step up, goal to be increased

BY PAUL PEDERSON

In the first four weeks of the seven-week *Militant* subscription campaign, nearly 1,700 people have subscribed. In response, supporters of the paper in 10 cities have already raised their quotas and others are discussing doing so. The original international goal of 2,000 will be increased in the coming week to reflect the excellent response the socialist press is getting.

Last week *Militant* campaigners also began to turn a corner on collecting contributions toward the $90,000 Militant Fund, which runs concurrently with the subscription drive. Nearly $19,000 was sent in—the highest one-week collection yet. Similar amounts need to be collected weekly for the remaining three weeks

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Puerto Rico unions protest mass layoffs by colonial gov't

BY RON RICHARDS

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico—Tens of thousands of workers in Puerto Rico have marched and picketed to protest the layoff of 95,000 public employees that began on May 1. On that day the colonial administration of Gov. Aníbal Acevedo Vilá, claiming it had run out of money, shut down public schools and many other government agencies across the island.

The government has used the layoffs and shutdown of public services to force through the first consumer sales tax in Puerto Rico's history. On May 4 the island's Senate voted to impose a 5.9 percent sales tax. As sugarcoating, it also approved a new tax on corporations with earnings of more than $10 million.

To protest the impending layoffs, many unions organized a march in San Juan on April 28 that drew 50,000. On May Day, several thousand people rallied in pouring rain, including contingents from the unions of electrical workers, teachers, and non-teaching university employees. In one incident reported by *El Nuevo Día* here, police clubbed protesters, two of whom received head wounds, one requiring medical attention. Protests have occurred since then throughout the island.

On May 9 the electrical workers union UTIER, the Teachers Federation of Puerto Rico, and other unions held a demonstration on the docks of San Juan, blocking access to a large cruise ship. In the cities of Mayagüez and Ponce, unionists held mass pickets at shopping malls.

Several other unions, however, postponed actions to wait for a promised resolution of the congressional deadlock on May 10. On that day a four-member commission is to present its plan to end the "budget crisis." Its members include an economist, a former president of the island's Supreme Court, a former director of the government's budget office, and an assistant to the Senate president.

Both the governor and legislators have stated they will accept the commission's recommendations.

The current confrontation in Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony, is part of a longer-term effort by capitalists to solve the economic crisis through belt-tightening measures against working people. In recent months the government has increased utility rates, pressured many public employees to take early retirement, and imposed tuition hikes in the universities.

Puerto Rico's ruling parties, Acevedo's pro-Commonwealth Popular Democrats (PPD) and the pro-statehood New Progressives (PNP), which currently dominates the legislature, have used the issue of the $740 million budget deficit as a club to demand further austerity measures. They have not agreed on a budget for the past two years.

The government claimed it would run out of money unless it adopted a sales tax. Acevedo called for a 7 percent tax, saying it was needed to obtain a loan to pay public employees' wages through June 30, the end of the fiscal year. PNP legislators called for a 4 percent tax. Legislators from the smaller Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) opposed any sales tax.

To try to drum up support, the PPD organized a march by its supporters on April 20 arguing that failure to agree on a sales tax would mean denying workers their *habichuelas* (beans).

The Senate eventually approved a compromise proposal for a 5.9 percent tax, which Acevedo said he would support.

The government shutdown affected 43 agencies, including 45,000 teachers and 600,000 students. Thousands of residents were left without garbage collection and other services. Children who depend on subsidized school breakfasts and lunches had to find hot meals elsewhere.

Meanwhile, on May 8 Moody's bond rating agency lowered some of the Puerto Rican government's bonds to junk status, and others just a notch above it.



Getty Images/José Jimenez Tirado

Thousands protest April 28 in San Juan against impending mass layoffs in Puerto Rico

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Sago miners' relatives denounce bosses' responsibility in disaster

Continued from front page
least through the summer.

Family members scorned the International Coal Group's (ICG) "preliminary investigation," which speculates that a lightning strike caused the mine explosion.

Speaking at the hearing, United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) president Cecil Roberts said, "Whatever you may think of ICG's lightning theory, we do know one thing. These miners were not killed by an explosion. And if you survive an explosion, there should be a way for you to get out of the mine. And miners should be provided with all the oxygen they need to survive for however long it takes to be rescued."

The questioning of MSHA officials by the family members exposed the slipshod character of the company's and the agency's rescue plan. According to all the testimony, an explosion occurred near where the 12 miners were working at 6:26 a.m. ICG delayed for two hours notifying MSHA. Seven hours passed before the first rescue plan was approved, and that only involved changing the ventilation scheme in the mine. "This was never a rescue effort. It was a recovery effort," said Russell Bennett whose father, Marty Bennett, was among the dead miners.

Equipment lacking

The hearing showed that vital equipment for the rescue effort was not available or may have malfunctioned. Randal McCloy, the only miner to survive the disaster, wrote a letter April 26 to the dead miners' families reporting that four of their emergency air packs had failed. Asked about this, ICG CEO Bennett Hatfield said he could not comment on McCloy's letter, but asserted that all the air packs from the crew had been retrieved and "were found to be working."

Trapped miners are trained to tap on roof bolts with a hammer to signal their location to rescuers, and a seismograph is used to determine where they are. The miners also listen for concussion shots set off above ground by rescue crews to acknowledge their signals.

No seismograph was on hand and no shots were set off. Asked why, MSHA district manager Kevin Stricklin said it would have taken eight hours to get the instrument and set it up.

"But we know from the notes left by the men that they were alive at 4:45 p.m.," shot back Pam Campbell, Marty Bennett's sister-in-law. That was more than 10 hours after the explosion, she noted.

"You failed these men," said Russell Bennett. "They are trained to strike on the roof bolts and to listen for shots, but no one was listening."

ampbell compared the federal mine agency's response to that of the social disaster on the Gulf Coast. "Today MSHA is not working. It failed us just like FEMA failed Hurricane Katrina victims," she said.

Paid consultants who were part of the company investigation dismissed the possibility of the explosion being caused by equipment, methane gas buildup, sparks from a battery or coal dust, or roof falls. Thomas Novak, a professor, claimed it was most likely cause by lightning. He speculated that charged particles from a lightning strike some two miles from the mine made their way by air across a river, charged nearby power lines leading into the mine, continued along the conveyor system, up the conveyor hangers, following a wire mesh along the roof, jumping an eight-foot gap in the mesh by entering the rock face, and then inexplicably penetrated the walls of a sealed area behind which methane gas had accumulated.

Sarah Bailey, daughter of miner George Junior Hamner, citing a long list of unsafe conditions in the mine, called the report "unbelievable." Asked by UMWA president Roberts if he knew of any other case of lightning causing a mine explosion, Novak said he did not.

Family member John Helms asked about the company's decision to ignore a carbon monoxide warning light that lit up on a dispatcher's computer board just before the crew entered the mine. Federal regulations require that after such an alarm, miners are to be evacuated to a safe distance until it can be determined that it is safe to work.

"Would these miners be alive today if you had evacuated them?" Helms asked.

"The dispatcher did what he was supposed to do," ICG vice president Sam Kitts replied. He said the dispatcher determined through a test on his board that the alarm was a malfunction. He could not answer how that test is conducted.

Marchers in Toronto demand justice for Filipino youth killed by cops



Militant/Natalie Doucet

TORONTO—Hundreds marched here May 6 to demand justice for Jeffrey Reodica, a Filipino youth fatally shot in the back by a plainclothes cop in 2004. After a two-year fight by family and supporters, the Ontario chief coroner announced an inquest starting May 8. A Special Investigations Unit decision had cleared the cop. "My son was executed. We will not rest until we get justice," Flora Reodica, mother of Jeffrey, told protesters. **—NATALIE DOUCET**

Raúl Corrales, photographer of Cuban Revolution

BY MIKE TABER

Raúl Corrales, considered by many to be the most outstanding photographer of the early years of the Cuban Revolution, died at his home outside Havana April 15. He was 81.

What distinguished Corrales's work was his ability to capture the revolution's mass proletarian character. He showed the ordinary men and women of Cuba as the decisive actors determining the course of the Cuban Revolution at every stage.

Among his most widely published photographs are those of the tumultuous welcome that greeted the Rebel Army's entrance into Havana in January 1959, when the revolution triumphed; of the popular support for the revolutionary militias and the agrarian reform; and of Fidel Castro leading the revolutionary forces in battle against the 1961 U.S.-organized mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs.

A number of these photos appear in books published by Pathfinder Press. These include *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*, *From the Escambray to the Congo*, *To Speak the Truth*, and others.

Corrales's stunning photo of a revolutionary militia unit assembling on Havana's seafront boulevard in January 1961 as U.S. invasion threats escalated, fills the cover of *Making History*, a collection of interviews with four generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces.

A number of those who worked on preparing these books, including this writer, had the opportunity to get to know Corrales over the years, visiting him many times at his home in Cojímar, east of Havana.

Corrales was deeply appreciative of the accuracy and quality of Pathfinder's books and pamphlets that make the truth of the Cuban Revolution accessible to new generations of working people and youth in the United States and around the world. He understood that the photo sections in these books helped bring the story to life and was pleased that many of his photos were among them. He often suggested photos of his own and others he thought might be of use, and went out of his way to get quality prints made for Pathfinder's use.

Not only did he provide photos. He would read the book after it was published. One could be confident that during the next visit he would comment on its content.

More than once he remarked on how important he thought the footnotes and glossaries were, allowing any person picking up the book—including in Cuba—to be able to find out about unfamiliar events and individuals.

Born into a poor family in rural Cuba in 1925, Corrales moved to Havana as a youth. He worked as a newspaper vendor, a shoeshine boy, and a janitor, but photography was a more and more serious hobby. In the early 1950s he became a photographer for *Hoy*, newspaper of the Popular Socialist Party. Many of his photographs were also published in large-circulation magazines such as *Bohemia* and *Carteles*.

Corrales specialized in going to the most remote parts of Cuba to photograph the lives of landless peasants, charcoal workers, sugarcane cutters, nickel miners, and other toilers.

All but a handful of his negatives and prints from before 1959 were destroyed by the Batista dictatorship's police in various raids, Corrales told us.



Raúl Corrales

Photo by Raúl Corrales showing Cuban militia members around time of Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961.

In the early years of the revolution Corrales worked for *Revolución*, the newspaper of the July 26 Movement, and other publications. He was one of Fidel Castro's official photographers between 1959 and 1961. He later worked for two and a half decades in the Office of Historical Affairs established by revolutionary leader Celia Sánchez, helping to preserve and organize the revolution's documentary and photographic legacy.

Despite being one of the premier world photographers of the 20th century, it was not the desire for fame and riches that drove him. With deep modesty, Corrales once told Cuban writer and journalist Ciro Bianchi Ross that his overriding passion was the Cuban Revolution. "I am a noted photo reporter because of an accident: It was the revolution that gave me the opportunity of being a witness to events that are now history."

Judge rules for Co-Op miners, case to proceed against 'Militant,' UMWA

BY PAUL MAILHOT

PRICE, Utah—"Claims of defamation against the individual miners are specious and disingenuous," wrote federal judge Dee Benson in a May 1 ruling dismissing 15 Co-Op miners from a lawsuit filed by C.W. Mining Company, the owner of the Co-Op Mine in nearby Huntington, and the company-allied International Association of United Workers Union (IAUWU).

Benson noted that the coal company's charges against the miners "seem to be nothing more than an attempt to intimidate their employees and quell honest discussion concerning labor issues." The judge did not grant attorneys' fees to the miners' lawyer, Richard Rosenblatt.

The judge's May 1 written ruling reaffirmed an earlier oral decision throwing out defamation charges against the *Salt Lake Tribune* and *Deseret Morning News.* Benson did award both major newspapers attorneys' fees.

The court's decision allows the lawsuit, originally filed 19 months ago in the midst of a hard fought union-organizing campaign at the Co-Op mine, to go forward against three of the defendants—the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), the *Militant* newspaper, and Utah Jobs with Justice.

The judge took two pages of a 54-page ruling to present his reasons for allowing the case against the *Militant* to proceed. His decision emphasized the *Militant*'s lack of "neutral" reporting on the Co-Op mine fight.

"Where the *Salt Lake Tribune* and *Deseret Morning News* attempted to display the perspective of both the miners and the owners," Benson wrote, "it is arguable the *Militant* offered no such neutral forum."

The judge cited a single example from an editorial in the *Militant* to illustrate why he denied the newspaper's motion to dismiss.

Benson took a few short sentences to also reject the motions to dismiss the case that had been filed by the UMWA and Utah Jobs with Justice. Benson said statements by UMWA international vice president Mike Dalpiaz about the coal company's "ruthless treatment of our miners" may have undermined the reputation of C.W. Mining. "The intent to undermine," Benson wrote, "is heightened by the apparent lack of opportunity given to plaintiffs to rebut these assertions."

Judge Benson is the chief judge of the U.S. District Court in Utah. He was appointed to the court by President George H. Bush in 1991. Benson graduated from Brigham Young University law school and served as Utah senator Orrin Hatch's chief of staff in 1986–88. He also served as counsel on the Iran-Contra Congressional Investigating Committee in 1987. According to the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Benson is one of 11 judges nationally who "sits on a secretive court that reviews and approves counterterrorism wiretaps and surveillance," which was created under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

Apart from his rulings on the company's defamation charges, the judge dismissed all other claims made by C.W. Mining and the IAUWU. The coal company had accused the miners, UMWA, and their supporters with racketeering and immigration law violations, unfair labor practices, invasion of privacy, intentional interference with economic relations, negligence, and civil conspiracy.

'Discovery' door opened

The judge also said he will permit some discovery as part of allowing the case to proceed. "Limited discovery may be necessary to determine whether the [allegedly defamatory] statements are true and whether they actually injured the plaintiffs," he ruled. During discovery, each side gets to probe for facts to help prove their case.

The defendants have 10 business days from the judge's ruling to file an answer to the case. Each charge in the complaint (there are 14 pages' worth for the *Militant*) must either be affirmed or denied. If the charge is denied, a reason must be given. Attorneys for the *Militant* say they will ask for extra time to answer the complaint. Once the answers are filed, all the attorneys in the case will have 60 days to hold a conference to agree on limits for discovery, and a schedule for when discovery will be completed and pre-trial motions are made.

(For those interested in reading the Benson ruling, it is posted at www.themilitant.com under the heading "Defend labor rights.")

NLRB hearing on miners' firings

At about the same time the judge was

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New Zealand maritime union backs California workers' organizing fight



Militant/Felicity Coggan

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Dockworkers and seafarers, members of Maritime Union Local 13 here, have joined an international campaign to support the union-organizing drive by more than 600 workers at Blue Diamond Growers almond processing plant in Sacramento, California. Blue Diamond Growers runs the largest such plant in the world.

Over the past year and a half, workers at Blue Diamond have fought to organize into International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 17. They are fighting for better wages, job security, improved health and safety, and respect on the job. The company has aggressively campaigned against the union, including firing four union supporters on flimsy pretexts, the union charges.

—FELICITY COGGAN AND NICK FOWLER

'Militant' sub goal to increase

Continued from front page

of the effort.

The following two reports give a taste of the opportunities.

At a Cinco de Mayo celebration in West St. Paul, 29 people signed up to subscribe. Carlos Sánchez, part of a team staffing the table, reports that at times it was so mobbed with people that the team could barely keep up.

"We need to organize the workers," said José, a roofer who signed up for a subscription at the rally, asking that his full name not be used. "It's dangerous work and there is no health insurance."

In addition, two people added their names to the list of endorsers of the Militant Defense Fund and a total of 17 Pathfinder books were sold. One of the top book buyers was a cleaner originally from El Salvador. She and her daughter left the table with four titles—the *Essential Works of V.I. Lenin*, *The Communist Manifesto* in Spanish by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* by Engels in Spanish, and *To Speak The Truth*, speeches by Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, central leaders of the Cuban Revolution.

Meanwhile, *Militant* supporters in Des Moines, Iowa, were holding an event that day for the Militant Fund. The meeting featured a panel of speakers that included Brian Taylor, a meat packer in South St. Paul, Minnesota, who has taken part in *Militant* reporting trips to Cuba, Venezuela, and Equatorial Guinea; Harold Ruggless, president of United Auto Workers Local 271; and Shannon Wohl, 28, a *Militant* supporter from Des Moines who helps sell the socialist newsweekly.

Taylor pointed to the millions of workers who took part in the May 1 actions around the country. He noted, "We can see the attraction to the *Militant* by the numbers who have subscribed to the paper recently."

"I do work within five-thousands of an inch, so I appreciate good tools," said Ruggless. "The *Militant* is a good tool." He said the paper, which he helps get around his workplace, provides inspiration and shows that working people can change society.

Wohl described participating in house visits with meat packers from Sudan and going to recent demonstrations for the rights of immigrant workers in Des Moines and Sioux City, Iowa.

Among those in attendance was a worker from the Tyson hog plant in Perry, Iowa, and another from Pine Ridge Farms, a hog cut-and-kill in Des Moines. Both came after being invited by co-workers who help distribute the *Militant.*

Spring 2006 'Militant' Sub Drive
April 8–May 28
Week 4 of 7

Country	Quota	Sold	%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	25	24	96%
London	50	40	80%
UK Total	75	64	85%
NEW ZEALAND			
Christchurch	15	12	80%
Auckland	30	20	67%
N.Z. Total	45	32	71%
UNITED STATES			
Seattle*	135	118	87%
Los Angeles	135	111	82%
Tampa	10	8	80%
Twin Cities*	185	147	79%
Miami	130	102	78%
Newark	140	105	75%
Houston*	120	89	74%
San Francisco*	85	61	72%
Des Moines*	170	121	71%
Washington, DC*	85	59	69%
Atlanta	75	51	68%
Amherst, MA	6	4	67%
New York	300	200	67%
Birmingham	85	56	66%
Philadelphia*	120	79	66%
Albany, NY*	15	9	60%
Chicago*	100	58	58%
Price	65	37	57%
Boston*	80	39	49%
Pittsburgh	60	24	40%
Detroit	20	5	25%
U.S. Total	2121	1478	70%
AUSTRALIA*	35	23	66%
ICELAND*	17	10	59%
CANADA	110	53	48%
SWEDEN	35	13	37%
Int'l totals	2438	1673	69%
*increased quota			

$90,000 'Militant' Fund Drive
April 15–May 28 ♦ Week 3 of 6

Country	Quota	Paid	%
FRANCE	250	150	60%
CANADA*	2,500	1,250	50%
AUSTRALIA	1,000	400	40%
UNITED STATES			
Tampa	300	350	117%
Atlanta*	4,500	2,845	63%
Houston*	3,500	1,940	55%
Des Moines*	2,100	1,149	55%
New York	12,000	6,095	51%
Chicago	5,500	2,774	50%
Boston*	3,300	1,560	47%
Miami*	2,400	1,080	45%
San Francisco	8,500	3,425	40%
Twin Cities	4,800	1,881	39%
Pittsburgh*	4,200	1,565	37%
Seattle	8,000	2,700	34%
Birmingham*	2,000	615	31%
Newark	3,500	1,070	31%
Los Angeles	8,500	1,830	22%
Washington, DC	2,500	508	20%
Philadelphia	3,200	620	19%
Albany	100	14	14%
Price	3,000	200	7%
Other		430	
U.S. Total	81,900	32,651	40%
NEW ZEALAND			
Christchurch	700	278	40%
Auckland	1,500	495	33%
N.Z. Total	2,200	773	35%
ICELAND	200	50	25%
SWEDEN	640	155	24%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	665	223	34%
London	1,300	245	19%
UK	1,965	468	24%
Int'l totals	90,655	35,897	40%
Goal/Should be	90,000	45,000	50%
*raised quota			

N.Y. forum discusses role of Black rights, working-class leader Robert F. Williams

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

NEW YORK—"The life of Robert F. Williams is of interest especially for those who want to build a revolutionary working-class party to achieve fundamental social change," to work toward bringing the working class to power, said Joel Britton at a well-attended Militant Labor Forum here. His March 24 talk was on "Robert F. Williams, the Fight for Black Liberation, and the Coming American Revolution." Britton is a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party.

Britton pointed out the best source for this history is the *Militant*. The socialist paper's coverage of the Black rights battles of the 1950s and '60s—including events that otherwise went unreported—gives a vivid picture of the mass, proletarian character of the movement that overturned Jim Crow segregation in the South.

He referred to numerous *Militant* articles depicting the outstanding role played by Williams when he headed the NAACP branch in Monroe, North Carolina. What comes across is his confidence in the ability of working people and the oppressed to successfully stand up to their oppressors.

There is increased interest today in his legacy, Britton noted, because the documentary *Negroes with Guns: Rob Williams and Black Power* has recently been shown on public television in many cities. The film takes its name from the 1962 book *Negroes with Guns*, which Williams wrote to explain why he and others in Monroe had organized armed self-defense against rightist thugs who tried to terrorize the Black community into giving up the fight against Jim Crow.

Getting out the truth about this working-class leader who was Black is especially important now, said Britton, because "the documentary omits so much of what Robert F. Williams fought for and did that you end up with a falsification of history." It leaves out in particular his activity in defense of the Cuban Revolution and his collaboration with socialists and others in Black rights and other political struggles.

Sustained working-class struggle

When the struggle began to heat up in the 1950s, said Britton, the middle-class individuals who headed up the local NAACP withdrew from the line of fire, and Williams stepped forward to become president of the chapter. He immediately set out to recruit workers to build up the ranks of the NAACP—at local pool halls, beauty parlors, and tenant farms. Williams drew on the skills and discipline he had acquired as a soldier in the Marines and as a worker in a union-organized auto plant.

"KKK meets gunfire in North Carolina," read a headline in the Oct. 14, 1957, *Militant*. In the middle of a battle to desegregate the public swimming pool in Monroe, led by the reorganized NAACP chapter, the Black community had come under attack from the Ku Klux Klan, which acted with the complicity of local police and government officials. After an October 5 rally, an armed Klan motorcade drove to the home of NAACP vice president Dr. Albert Perry. But the night riders were put to flight by a well-organized defense force led by Williams.

A year later, the "kissing case" hit the national headlines. The *Militant* covered this fight, an example of the new fighting leadership that was developing in the civil rights movement. The socialist paper helped spread the truth about the story of how two Black boys, Hanover Thompson, aged nine, and Fuzzy Simpson, aged eight, were arrested in Monroe because one of them had been kissed by a white girl playmate.

Williams helped initiate the Committee to Combat Racial Injustice (CCRI) to win broader support in the fight to free the two boys, who had been convicted of "sexual assault" and faced being sentenced to reform school until the age of 21. In addition to Williams and Perry, leaders of the CCRI included attorney Conrad Lynn, longtime civil rights worker Carl Braden, and George Weissman, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party.

"North Carolina Children Win Freedom. World-Wide Protest Compels Racists to Let Boys Go Home," reported a Feb. 23, 1959, headline in the *Militant.* The CCRI had been receiving petitions across the country and worldwide calling for Hanover and Fuzzy's release.

In the spring of 1959, following the acquittal of a white man for an attempted rape of a Black woman in Monroe, Williams was quoted in the press saying that in face of racist terror, the Black community should be willing to "meet violence with violence." Leading up to the 1959 national convention of the NAACP, Roy Wilkins and other NAACP leaders seized on this incident to distance itself from Williams's militant methods of mass struggle and charged him with advocating "retaliation" against whites. He was suspended for six months from his office as president of the Union County, North Carolina, chapter, but he refused to withdraw from the struggle.



Members of the Monroe, North Carolina, NAACP organized self-defense units in 1957 against racist Klan violence. Inset: Robert F. Williams in 1960.

Defends Cuban Revolution

On Jan. 1, 1959, U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista fled Cuba as the Rebel Army and July 26 Movement, headed by Fidel Castro, led workers and farmers to establish a revolutionary government. It mobilized working people to carry out a far-reaching social transformation including the outlawing of racist discrimination. "I wish every American Negro could visit Cuba and see what it really means to be treated as a first-class citizen," said Williams, who first traveled there in 1960.

Williams became a founding member of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee (FPCC), which campaigned to tell the truth about the revolution and organized protests against Washington's efforts to overthrow it. "You would never have known this fact from the video documentary being shown now," said Britton.

The *Militant*, on the other hand, published an article in its March 13, 1961, issue on a large FPCC meeting in Los Angeles. It reported how right-wing thugs "failed to prevent an audience of over 800 from entering the hall to hear Vincent Hallinan, former Progressive Party candidate for President, and Robert F. Williams, militant Southern Negro leader, speak on 'The Case for Cuba.'"

During these years Williams was a target of government harassment. In the summer of 1961, framed up on kidnapping charges, Williams decided to flee the country. He lived in exile for eight years, first in Cuba, where he was the voice of Radio Free Dixie, and then in China, before returning to the United States.

Britton quoted from a message sent by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes to a November 1996 meeting in Detroit honoring Williams. The revolutionary fighter's "integrity and courage as a leader of the struggle against racism, exploitation, and oppression set an important example for a generation becoming active in politics in the late 1950s and early 1960s." Barnes wrote.

"As Malcolm X said, young fighters will recognize and assert their self-worth and transform themselves as they work to transform society. These militants are and will be the best tribute to those like Robert F. Williams in whose footsteps they tread."

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

May 22, 1981

The tens of thousands who converged on the Pentagon May 3 to protest U.S. intervention in El Salvador have thrown a spotlight on the depth of the antiwar, antidraft sentiment that exists in this country.

Actions like the May 3 protest, uniting a wide range of organizations and involving participants from all walks of life, have a powerful effect on the working class. They reinforce and extend the antidraft, antiwar sentiment that already runs strong among millions of union members. Public employees, auto workers, electrical workers, and other unionists joined the May 3 march.

The widespread protests have also helped inspire the formation of labor committees on El Salvador in San Jose and New York. Speakers from the Revolutionary Democratic Front of El Salvador have appeared before dozens of union meetings.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

May 21, 1956

The growing crisis in the auto and farm equipment industry was dramatized last week by a one day shutdown of all General Motors assembly plants in the country. This is the first time since the economic recession preceding the Korean war that the biggest producer in the auto industry closed all its assembly plants for a one day production "holiday"—without pay.

The UAW [United Auto Workers] finds itself tied up with a long term three-year agreement that does not expire until 1958. From the far west in California to the eastern seaboard in New Jersey, Southgate Local 216 and Linden Local 595, have called upon the UAW International Executive Board to invoke the principle of the "living agreement," and negotiate a new contract.

In each case, placed at the head of the list, is the demand for a 30-hour week at 40-hours pay.

THE MILITANT

Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America (Opposition)

May 15, 1931

The City Government [in Minneapolis] has been seized by a fit of Red hysteria and for some time has been prohibiting and breaking up all kinds of radical meetings. The Stalinists have virtually accepted the situation as a proof that the capitalists are against the workers and that the city officials are tools of the capitalists. Thus, they prove that there is no free speech, which they consider a point in their favor—and there are no public meetings of the party.

The Left Oppositionists have a different idea. In view of the fact that the capitalist government professes to guarantee these rights, and that the masses of workers who are in no way connected with the Communists ardently believe in them, they decided to test the issue in a fight for free speech. To that unique idea they added another: That a wide movement should be set in motion on this issue.

Immigrant rights protests

Continued from front page
cided to shut down that day.

In Congress, Democratic and Republican politicians remain divided on putting together a law that will bring more of the estimated 12 million undocumented workers in the United States under the control of the bosses and the government.

The focus of the initial round of immigrant rights protests was opposition to the House-approved Sensenbrenner bill, which would brand all undocumented immigrants as felons, and support for one of the Senate bills that contain a "guest worker" program. Since then, however, many immigrant workers have begun to express concern about the millions who might be found ineligible to apply and other restrictions contained in these bills.

"What's going to happen to the many people who have only been here one year?" asked Minerva Ramírez, a meat packer at Wolverine Packing Co. in Detroit. "Some say that if others see we are getting documents, everyone is going to want to come here," Ramírez told the *Militant.* She said that in her department, many U.S.-born workers, although not all, have backed co-workers like herself who have joined immigrant rights actions.



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

In New York 100,000 marched May 1 for legalizing status of undocumented immigrants, as 2 million mobilized nationwide. With confidence on rise, discussion has continued in factories and other worksites, among foreign- and U.S.-born workers alike.

U.S. gov't uses 'peace' accord in Sudan to press for troops

Continued from front page
such an accord was signed.

Some 10,000 UN-helmeted troops are already deployed in the country as the result of a 2005 pact that ended a 21-year civil war between the government, based in the largely Arab north, and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in the largely Black south. In addition, about 7,000 African Union troops are currently in Darfur.

An expanding African oil industry, centered in West Africa's Gulf of Guinea, has already brought an increased U.S. military presence to the region. And over the last decade Sudan has emerged as the third-largest oil producing nation on the continent. Oil accounts for about 70 percent of Sudan's exports.

The opening for imperialist intervention in Sudan has been a devastating crisis triggered by a three-year civil war—more than 200,000 people are estimated to have died, and 2 million left homeless.

The antigovernment insurgency in Darfur is led by the SLA and the smaller Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). They accuse the central government in Khartoum of discrimination against the largely Black population in this western region. Arab-speaking militia groups known as the Janjaweed, which the rebels say are backed by the government, have carried out bloody attacks on the civilian population in an effort to crush the revolt.

Under the May 5 accord, the national authorities have pledged to disarm the militia, accept about 5,000 opposition troops into the army and police, and share power in a temporary regional government to be created in Darfur. The JEM and a faction of the SLA refused to sign the agreement, demanding government positions and funding.

In the United States, an April 30 "Stop Genocide" rally of tens of thousands in Washington heard Democratic and Republican politicians call for military intervention in Sudan. The Democrats included Alfred Sharpton, Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois, and Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California. U.S president George Bush also endorsed the rally.

United for Peace and Justice, which organized an April 29 rally against the U.S. occupation of Iraq, is backing weekly vigils at the U.S. mission to the United Nations to demand that UN troops be sent to Darfur. The pro-intervention actions are promoted on the group's website.

Judge rules in C.W. Mining suit

Continued from page 4
making his decision in the federal lawsuit, attorneys for the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) have been preparing for a hearing to begin May 16 in Price, Utah. The hearing is meant to take up C.W. Mining's objection to the NLRB Regional 27 director Allan Benson's finding that the coal company fired miners for union activity.

Shortly before a union representation election in December 2004, the Co-Op mine owners terminated nearly every worker who supported the UMWA.

According to a determination made by the NLRB Region 27 director in December 2005, the 29 miners fired for supposed immigration law violations were in fact discharged for supporting "the Union and to discourage employees from engaging in these and other concerted activities."

The NLRB director further stated that Alyson Kennedy and Guillermo Hernandez, two other miners who were also terminated before the election, were fired for their union support activities. The labor board determination concluded that C.W. Mining "has been discriminating in regard to hire or tenure or terms and conditions of employment of its employees, thereby discouraging membership in a labor organization…."

The NLRB has specified that the company must make a back pay award to several fired miners who were involved in union-organizing activities going back to September 2003. The NLRB based its proposed award on wages of $5.75 to $8.25 an hour.

If the determinations of the labor board are upheld in the May 16 hearings, miners who were involved in the Co-Op union effort say the votes of 31 fired miners will likely be counted to determine whether the UMWA or the company-allied International Association of United Workers Union won the union election.

A meeting of former Co-Op miners who were involved in the union-organizing struggle was held to discuss the judge's ruling and to prepare for the upcoming NLRB hearing. At the meeting, one miner noted, "We were the ones who started this, yet the groups who helped us—the union, the *Militant*, and Jobs with Justice—are the ones still in the lawsuit. That is an injustice. This is not over until everyone is out of the lawsuit."

How labor misleaders buried May Day in U.S.

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—The massive working-class rallies and marches across the United States for immigrant rights on May 1 show that the celebration of International Workers Day is being reborn in this country. This is sparking renewed interest in how May Day originated more than a century ago as part of labor's struggle for an eight-hour day.

Less known is the fact that May Day, celebrated in large rallies through the 1930s, was buried by the Social Democratic and Stalinist misleaders of the labor movement as they backed Washington's moves to drag working people into World War II.

May Day was born in the United States. During the mass campaign that arose to win the eight-hour workday, the forerunner of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) set May 1, 1886, as a deadline for the bosses and their government to implement the measure. On that date, hundreds of thousands of workers across the country went on strike.

Seeking to defeat this movement, the government framed up and hanged several anarchist workers, convicting them for a bomb explosion at a labor rally at Chicago's Haymarket Square. Beginning in 1890, after the founding of the Second (Socialist) International the year before, May 1 was celebrated as a worldwide working-class holiday that also honored the Haymarket Martyrs.

The bosses and their labor lieutenants tried everything to exorcise May Day. AFL leader Samuel Gompers proposed replacing it with "May Sunday," a day when workers would hold picnics in the park and listen to speeches by labor fakers. In 1894 President Grover Cleveland signed a bill declaring the first Monday in September as "Labor Day." Meanwhile, around the world May Day celebrations continued.

In the United States, May Day was celebrated by the left wing of the labor movement. In 1918, during World War I, the Woodrow Wilson administration banned these demonstrations. But in 1919, thousands of workers poured into the streets of U.S. cities in the most militant May Day rallies held yet in the country.

The mass labor struggles of the mid-1930s gave new impetus and militancy to these celebrations. The *Militant* reported in its May 4, 1935, issue that more than 100,000 trade unionists marched in New York that year, the biggest May Day mobilization since the world war. It included contingents of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), and other unions. Marching past the General Motors offices, the unionists chanted "Support Toledo Chevrolet Strikers!" in solidarity with a union-organizing battle.

In 1936 a United Front May Day Committee was formed in New York that included the Communist Party, the Workers Party (forerunner of the Socialist Workers Party), and the left wing of the Socialist Party. It was the first since 1919 to include such a broad range of currents in the workers movement.

When the U.S. rulers began a drive in the late 1930s toward a new imperialist war for markets and colonies, the Communist and Socialist parties—having abandoned any pretense of a revolutionary course—fell in line behind the Roosevelt administration's war campaign. As the Stalin-led Soviet bureaucracy sought an alliance with U.S. imperialism, Communist parties and around the world used their influence in the labor movement to try to tame opposition to the war and to the government's assault on labor.

In 1938 the CP-led unions in New York organized a May Day parade to the accompaniment of patriotic songs. Placards and banners in the march denounced German fascism but made no mention of Washington's war preparations. In spite of that, ILGWU locals declined to take part in the flag-waving parade and held their own May Day rally. The Socialist Workers Party held May Day meetings in several cities, opposing the imperialist war moves and commemorating the Russian Revolution. After the imperialist slaughter began, the U.S. Stalinists and Social Democrats buried May Day celebrations altogether in the name of "national unity." For decades the bosses thought that, while May 1 continued to be celebrated around the world, they had killed it in the United States.

Today, however, with millions of foreign-born workers joining the ranks of the working class and bringing their traditions of struggle, May Day is being reborn in this country as a day of international working-class struggle.

Meeting celebrates life and contributions of SWP leader Clifton DeBerry

BY WENDY LYONS

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO—The United Food and Commercial Workers Local 101 hall here was the scene of an enthusiastic meeting on May 6 to celebrate the life and political contributions of Clifton DeBerry, a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party and veteran of working-class struggles.

Among the more than 100 people in attendance were many members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party who worked with DeBerry over the course of his decades of political activity. DeBerry died March 24 at the age of 82.

A display of photos and news clippings depicted events in the history of the working class that DeBerry lived through and that impacted his political activity. These included the post–World War II strike wave, the rise of anticolonial revolutions in the 1940s and '50s, the Cuban Revolution, the development of the civil rights movement in the 1950s, the anti–Vietnam War and Black rights movements in the 1960s and early '70s, and more recent struggles by working people against attacks by the ruling class.

Among the speakers was Julian Santana from Los Angeles, representing the Young Socialists. He described the large immigrant rights mobilizations in which he and many others at the meeting had recently participated.

"DeBerry is a role model for Young Socialists today," said Santana. Pointing to DeBerry's decision, at the age of 19, to go to the South in 1942 to help organize textile and other workers, Santana said, "He did this at a time when being a union organizer or outspoken in defense of civil rights could get you lynched."

DeBerry's early life was described by Tom Leonard, a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party's activity in the trade union movement.

Born in 1923 in Holly Springs, Mississippi, DeBerry was sent North to live with relatives and attend school in Chicago. His family hoped he would have better opportunities there than in the segregated Jim Crow South.

Union battles

In his early 20s, DeBerry helped lead a successful walkout for higher pay at the large International Harvester plant near Chicago where he worked, Leonard related. Co-workers pressed him to run for shop steward. The union was dominated by members of the Stalinized Communist Party, who told him he had to join the CP if he wanted to be a shop steward. He decided to join.

As a member of the CP, DeBerry found himself increasingly critical of that party's course of class collaboration and of its willingness to subordinate the fight for full equality for African-Americans to support for capitalist politicians. In 1953 he joined the Socialist Workers Party following a series of discussions with party leader Farrell Dobbs, who had been a central leader of the 1934 Teamsters strikes in Minneapolis.

Joel Britton, a member of the National Committee of the SWP, spoke about what it was like to join the branch of the SWP that had recruited DeBerry a decade earlier. Clifton and Carol DeBerry, also a member of the party, had moved to New York City in 1960 to take on party responsibilities there.

Britton said he learned about the struggles party members had taken part in, including union battles going back to the postwar strike wave. DeBerry and other SWP members were active in the NAACP and the Washington Park Forum, organizations that fought racist attacks and segregation in Chicago as well as supporting the southern civil rights movement.

Britton pointed to a display featuring a *Militant* article DeBerry wrote on the mass protest meeting he helped organize to condemn the 1955 lynching of Emmett Till in Mississippi.



Militant/Eli Green

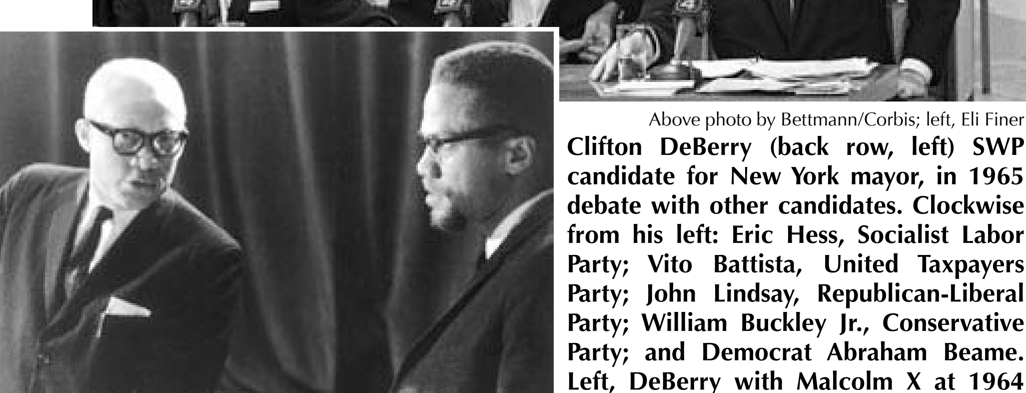
SWP national secretary Jack Barnes. He explained that DeBerry, as a communist leader, was an educator always conscious of training new cadres of the movement and giving them opportunity to take increasing responsibilities.

That same year, Britton said, civil rights fighters launched the Montgomery bus boycott against segregation in public transportation. In response to an appeal from central boycott leader E.D. Nixon, DeBerry helped raise money for station wagons to Montgomery. He drove one down and stayed for a time with the Nixons.

1964 SWP candidate for president

In 1964 DeBerry was the SWP's candidate for U.S. president together with Ed Shaw for vice president. Britton described campaigning as part of Youth for DeBerry and Shaw. Many messages sent to the meeting were from individuals who were recruited or drawn closer to the Young Socialist Alliance and Socialist Workers Party by that campaign.

Beverly Bernardo, a member of the Communist League in Canada, wrote of a 1964 meeting she attended for DeBerry at San Jose State College. She wasn't convinced on the spot of what he said about the need for workers to break with the Democratic Party and form their own party, she wrote, but the meeting "opened my eyes to a revolutionary working-class perspective."



Above photo by Bettmann/Corbis; left, Eli Finer

Clifton DeBerry (back row, left) SWP candidate for New York mayor, in 1965 debate with other candidates. Clockwise from his left: Eric Hess, Socialist Labor Party; Vito Battista, United Taxpayers Party; John Lindsay, Republican-Liberal Party; William Buckley Jr., Conservative Party; and Democrat Abraham Beame. Left, DeBerry with Malcolm X at 1964 Militant Labor Forum in New York City.

"For DeBerry, the most important thing was building the party," Sam Manuel told the meeting. Manuel, a SWP National Committee member and the *Militant*'s Washington correspondent, first met DeBerry at a 1969 Black Power conference at Morehouse College in Atlanta, a few months before joining the Young Socialist Alliance. He described how DeBerry was part of winning him to the party and training him and a whole layer of Black youth in revolutionary politics. "He had an attitude of seeing any task you take on through to the end," said Manuel.

James Harris, who co-chaired the meeting along with Betsey Stone, pointed to the Socialist Workers Party's efforts that DeBerry was part of to push forward developments toward independent working-class political action.

He read a message from Ken Morgan, who was a leader of the National Black Independent Political Party, formed at a 1980 convention of 1,500 in Philadelphia. Morgan wrote that DeBerry "is a shining example of a human being who worked with other dedicated toilers to change the miserable conditions that exist on this earth as Malcolm X so eloquently stated. His work should motivate all of us to continue his legacy and the work of the Socialist Workers Party."

Norton Sandler and others noted in their messages that Clifton and Carol moved to the Bay Area in 1970. Later, DeBerry, in his late 50s, joined the party's turn to the industrial unions. He went to work as a painter at a Lockheed plant and was in the party's Machinists union fraction.

SWP national secretary Jack Barnes was the final speaker. He said that DeBerry, who shouldered leadership responsibilities on the National Committee and then the Control Commission of the SWP, as well as on executive committees of branches, "never served on any without realizing that what he did, and how he worked, had consequences on others."

DeBerry knew from direct experience, Barnes noted, that the civil rights movement did not conquer through nonviolence but by determined organization of workers like himself who were prepared to defend leaders and volunteers with serious organized defense, arms in hand. "There was not a night that Martin Luther King's house was not defended by veterans, unionists, and sometimes little old ladies who had weapons in their purses or under a feathered hat," Barnes said.

DeBerry was a major public figure in the anti–Vietnam War movement through the election campaigns he

Continued on page 9

Right, Sam Manuel, SWP National Committee member and *Militant*'s Washington correspondent, speaks at meeting. Below, participants talk over dinner before the program.

Militant photos by Eli Green



Sankara: no revolution without women's equality

Below is an excerpt from Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle. *The Spanish-language edition of this pamphlet is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month in May. The main item in the pamphlet is a speech by Thomas Sankara, central leader of the Aug. 4, 1983, revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso, formerly called Upper Volta. The occasion was a rally of several thousand women in the country's capital, Ouagadougou, on March 8, 1987, marking International Women's Day. For four years the Sankara-led government carried out an ambitious program that included land reform, fighting corruption, and prioritizing education and health care. The specific excerpt below is from a section of the revolution's basic programmatic document, Sankara's Political Orientation Speech, issued shortly after the revolution's victory. Both items can also be found in Pathfinder's collection* Thomas Sankara Speaks. *On Oct. 15, 1987, Sankara was murdered in a counterrevolutionary military coup that destroyed the revolutionary government. Copyright © 1990 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*



Militant/Pat Wright

Women soldiers march on Aug. 29, 1985, in second anniversary celebration of revolution in West African country of Burkina Faso, whose central leader was Thomas Sankara.

BY THOMAS SANKARA

The weight of the centuries-old traditions of our society has relegated women to the rank of beasts of burden. Women suffer doubly from all the scourges of neocolonial society. First, they experience the same suffering as men. Second, they are subjected to additional suffering by men.

Our revolution is in the interests of all the oppressed and all those who are exploited in today's society. It is therefore in the interests of women, since the basis of their domination by men lies in the way society's system of political and economic life is organized. By changing the social order that oppresses women, the revolution creates the conditions for their genuine emancipation.

The women and men of our society are all victims of imperialist oppression and domination. That is why they wage the same struggle. The revolution and women's liberation go together. We do not talk of women's emancipation as an act of charity or because of a surge of human compassion. It is a basic necessity for the triumph of the revolution. Women hold up the other half of the sky.

Forging a new mentality on the part of Voltaic women that allows them to take responsibility for the country's destiny alongside men is one of the primary tasks of the revolution. At the same time, it is necessary to transform men's attitudes toward women.

Up until now, women have been excluded from the realm of decision making. The revolution, by entrusting responsibilities to women, is creating the conditions for turning loose their fighting initiative. As part of its revolutionary policy, the CNR [National Council of the Revolution] will work to mobilize, organize, and unite all the active forces of the nation, and women will not lag behind. Women will be an integral part of all the battles we will have to wage against the various shackles of neocolonial society and for the construction of a new society. They will take part in all levels of the organization of the life of the nation as a whole, from conceiving projects to making decisions and implementing them. The final goal of this great undertaking is to build a free and prosperous society in which women will be equal to men in all domains.

However, we need a correct understanding of the question of women's emancipation. It does not signify a mechanical equality between men and women. It does not mean acquiring habits similar to those of men, such as drinking, smoking, and wearing trousers. Nor will acquiring diplomas make women equal to men or more emancipated. A diploma is not a passport to emancipation.

The genuine emancipation of women is that which entrusts responsibilities to them and involves them in productive activity and in the different struggles the people face. Women's genuine emancipation is one that exacts men's respect and consideration. Emancipation, like freedom, is not granted but conquered. It is for women themselves to put forward their demands and mobilize to win them. For that, the democratic and popular revolution will create the necessary conditions to allow Voltaic women to realize themselves fully and completely. After all, would it be possible to eliminate the system of exploitation while maintaining the exploitation of women, who make up more than half our society?

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EDITORIAL

No imperialist intervention in Sudan!

Working people should oppose all imperialist sanctions and military intervention in Sudan, including United Nations "peacekeeping" troops.

Under the pretext of responding to a humanitarian crisis, the U.S. government is calling for sending a force of several thousand troops to the Darfur region of western Sudan. The soldiers will be wearing UN blue helmets and their official mission will be "peace." Like all UN-sponsored military interventions, however, this force will serve only one purpose: to enforce the predatory interests of Washington and other imperialist powers—the number one cause of war and exploitation in the world.

"Stop the genocide—save Sudan" is the cry today of liberal capitalist politicians, repeated by middle-class radicals. For the past two years, Democrats from Sen. John Kerry to Rep. Charles Rangel have sought to outdo the Bush administration in calling for an imperialist-organized military force to Darfur. Their argument is that "the world" must do "something" about the tens of thousands of people in Darfur who have been killed by government-backed militias or driven from their homes. This rationalization dovetails with Washington's argument that Sudan is a "failed state" and thus "someone"—the imperialist powers—must step in and impose "peace."

The U.S. government and the billionaire families it represents couldn't care less about the people of Darfur. They do care about the fact that Sudan is the third-largest oil producing country in Africa. The purpose of military intervention will be to ensure greater U.S. control over Sudan's natural wealth and to edge out Washington's rivals in the worldwide imperialist drive for resources, markets, and territory. The aim is to pressure the Sudanese government, which has long been at odds with Washington, to get in line with imperialist dictates, as part of the U.S. rulers' "long war" over the domination of the Mideast, Africa, and other regions of the world.

Under the Clinton administration Sudan was branded a "terrorist state" and its capital was bombed in 1998. The UN Security Council has decreed sanctions against Sudan, and 10,000 UN troops are already there under a pact ending a long civil conflict. Another 7,000 African Union troops are currently in Darfur.

UN military interventions have always served imperialist interests. The bloody record includes the U.S. war against Korea in 1950–53; the UN deployment to the Congo under which Patrice Lumumba, the country's first prime minister, was assassinated in 1961 by pro-imperialist forces; and more recently, UN contingents in Yugoslavia and Haiti.

The main source of brutality, malnutrition, and disease in Sudan and elsewhere in the world is not "failed states." It is imperialism, which has blocked the development of the economies of the semicolonial countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. For more than a century the imperialist powers—first British colonialism, today Washington—have fostered divisions in Sudan by language, religion, national origin, and geography.

Only the people of Sudan, who in the past have shown their ability to stand up to colonialism and oppression, can address the crisis in their country and establish a government that represents their interests.

UN or other imperialist-organized troops will only serve to block Sudanese peasants and workers from organizing to win their liberation. No imperialist intervention in Sudan! End the sanctions!

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

ALABAMA

Birmingham

Immigrant Workers Revive May Day: The Growing Role of the Militant in Today's Working-class Struggles. Militant Fund Event. Speaker: Ellie Garcia, organizer of the Socialist Workers Party Atlanta branch. Sun., May 21. Reception, 2:00 p.m.; program, 3:00 p.m. 3029A Bessemer Rd. Tel.: (205) 780-0021.

FLORIDA

Miami

Union Scores Victories at University of Miami. Support SEIU Organizing Drive! Fri., May 19. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 8365 NE 2nd Ave. Room 206. Tel.: (305) 756-4436.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

Behind Bolivia's Nationalization of Oil and Gas. Speaker: Tony Lane, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 19, 7:30 p.m. Donation: $4 program. 5907 Penn Ave. Suite 225.

TEXAS

Houston

Reports From Participants: May 1 Demonstration in Defense of Immigrant Rights; April 24 Women Miners Conference in Farmington, New Mexico; and Militant Reporting Teams to Mexico and New Orleans. Militant Fund Event. Sat., May 20. Banquet, 6:00 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 4800 W. 34th St. Suite C-51A. Tel.: (713) 869-6650.

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

Mass Protests Against Monarchy Sweep Nepal. Sat., May 20, 5:00 p.m. 287 Selwyn St., Spreydon. Tel.: (03) 930-3373.

SWEDEN

Stockholm

Nepal—Monarchy's True Face? Fri., May 19. Dinner, 6:00 p.m., program, 7:00 p.m. Bildhuggarvägen 17, 121 44 Johanneshov. Tel.: (08) 31 69 33.

CALENDAR

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

U.S. Hands Off Venezuela and Cuba! Rally at U.S. consulate (on corner of Castlereigh St. and Martin Place). Sat., May 20. 12:00 noon. **Launching of *Our History is Still Being Written*.** Sun., May 21, 3:00 p.m. CFMEU Building, 12 Railway St. Lidcombe.

Tribute to SWP leader Clifton DeBerry

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ran in, first against Lyndon Johnson and Barry Goldwater in 1964 and then for mayor of New York in 1965. The middle-class left had supported Democratic president Johnson, who after his election immediately proceeded to escalate the war. The SWP campaign offered a clear working-class alternative to the twin capitalist parties of war and racism.

"DeBerry was a unique figure in communist history," said Barnes. "He was the only cadre in the CP after World War II who we won who became a leader of the communist movement." Many others were so embittered by their experience in the CP that they didn't remain long in politics.

Barnes described the collaboration between DeBerry and Farrell Dobbs. Dobbs always considered DeBerry one of the handful of people who made it possible to link on a proletarian basis the oldest generation of the party with the new layers of youth coming around, Barnes said. He was an educator, always conscious of training new people and giving them an opportunity to take greater and greater responsibility, said Barnes.

Collaboration with Malcolm X

DeBerry spent a lot of time talking to Malcolm X during the latter's political evolution in the last year of his life, Barnes noted. "Malcolm's growing conviction that he could function only by seeing things and acting on a world scale should not be taken for granted, given the narrowness of the movement he came out of," he said. Malcolm was developing a way of judging people by their trajectory, their dependability and commitment to freedom by any means necessary. His growing convergence with revolutionary socialists "was something that both Farrell Dobbs and Clifton DeBerry took naturally," growing out of their own experiences, said Barnes.

Among those in attendance were Carol DeBerry, Clifton's companion of more than 50 years, and their daughter Simone DeBerry. An excellent Vietnamese dinner preceded the meeting. A party-building collection for the SWP raised nearly $4,000 from those in attendance.

Cuba's aid to Bolivia

Continued from front page

its natural gas from Bolivia.

Following the seizure of the gas resources, the Bolivian government announced that it would increase the royalties paid by foreign owners from 18 percent to 82 percent of the value of the gas. The foreign investors that stand to lose the most in this are Repsol YPF of Spain and Brazil's state-owned Petrobras. Lesser stakes are held by the British-based BG Group and Total of France.

Petrobras announced May 3 that it was suspending investment in Bolivia and that any attempt to increase the price of gas above that stipulated in prior contracts would be challenged "through the appropriate arbitration."

The Bolivian government is not assuming total control of the gas fields. "Foreign companies can continue to operate there," the *Wall Street Journal* reported May 3, "but must accept much tougher contract terms within six months or leave the country."

The nationalization of Bolivia's gas and oil, one of Morales's campaign promises before his election in December, came after years of mass struggles. Anger over the imperialist plunder and foreign control of Bolivia's natural resources has led to demonstrations by miners, indigenous peasants, and other working people that toppled two governments in less than two years.

In October 2003 the regime of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada fell after a bloody crackdown on protests against a pending deal to export Bolivia's gas to the United States and construct a pipeline to do so through Chile. The next president, Carlos Mesa, resigned in June 2005 in face of a similar rebellion, this time directed at moves to sell the gas to Argentina.

Morales has announced that the government also intends to take greater state control over other natural resources, including mining and forestry.

New Jersey socialist campaign wins hearing

BY SARA LOBMAN

NEWARK, New Jersey—"It was Socialist Workers Party candidate Nancy Rosenstock who drew the biggest applause from the crowd…when she said more police in schools was not a solution," noted Bill Albers, a reporter for PoliticsNJ.com, in a May 3 story on a debate the previous night between the four candidates for mayor. The event was held before a crowd of 500 students and working people at the Paul Robeson Campus Center at Rutgers University's Newark campus.

"'They're treating our children like prisoners!' she exclaimed, to loud cheers. 'The police are there to punish us and keep us in line, not to protect us!'" Albers added.

The other mayoral candidates—Cory Booker, David Blount, and Ronald Rice—all of whom are Democrats, placed at the center of their campaign platforms the call for more cops, curfews, and stricter enforcement of laws aimed at harassing working people.

The Socialist Workers Party fielded two candidates in the May 9 municipal elections. Rosenstock is a meat packer and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers. Chauncey Robinson, a retail worker and member of the Young Socialists, ran for City Council in the West Ward. This was the first time since 1978 that the SWP was on the ballot for mayor of Newark.

Both candidates were part of one-hour televised debates on Cablevision that were aired repeatedly leading up to the election. Rosenstock also addressed a meeting of the Newark Firefighters Union and spoke at a "Candidates come to the Grassroots" cosponsored by the People's Organization for Progress and the New Black Panther Party.

"Go into the campaign headquarters of Nancy Rosenstock and it's not posters and buttons, it's books," reported Michael Weber in a March 17 news story presented on the cable news channel New Jersey Network. As the camera slowly panned the bookshelves in the socialist campaign headquarters, he noted the "books about Malcolm X, Karl Marx, Che Guevara."

An April 27 article in the Newark *Star-Ledger* about the West Ward city council candidates quoted Robinson as saying, "We take the campaign seriously. If we do get in, we will continue to campaign. But we know we can't change things working inside the system…. For us, it's not about winning an election. We set our sights higher. We want to get rid of the class hierarchy."